



Report 09.13  
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Committee Parks, Forests & Utilities Committee  
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## Water supply development projects – customer feedback

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the feedback received on the water supply development projects from the Wellington, Hutt, Upper Hutt and Porirua City Councils.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

Report 08.244 ‘Bulk Water Supply Development Strategy 2008’ was considered by the Committee at its meeting of 8 May 2008. The strategy document ‘Wellington Metropolitan Water Supply Development’ was attachment 1 of the report.

The strategy identified three short-term development projects that together would reinstate the 2% shortfall security standard (1 in 50 year drought) through to 2013 at the projected rate of population growth. The three projects were to raise the water level of the Stuart Macaskill Lakes, reduce the residual water flow at Kaitoke weir, and construct a new water reservoir in Wellington City (CBD reservoir).

A fourth project (development of the Upper Hutt aquifer), together with the short-term projects, would maintain the security of supply standard for at least a further 10 years. Following that, construction of a dam was seen as the preferred long-term supply option.

This strategy did not take into account any reduction in consumption that would result from demand management initiatives and is therefore a worst case scenario for the timing of the aquifer development and a dam. Demand management initiatives are being addressed in the draft Regional Water

Strategy, expected to be approved for public consultation towards the end of this financial year.

In considering Report 08.244 the Committee approved consultation with the four city councils about the four short-term water source development projects and selection of the Whakatikei dam site for development at such time as it may be required.

Following the Committee meeting each of the four city council customers was provided with a copy of Report 08.244, together with other relevant information requested by the customers, and written feedback was sought on the three short-term projects, the Upper Hutt aquifer and the selection of Whakatikei as the preferred dam site.

Greater Wellington has provided information and maintained communications with the city council customers to ensure that informed feedback could be provided on the development options. This has included PowerPoint presentations on the water supply development strategy to committees of the Wellington, Hutt and Porirua city councils.

## **4. Comment**

### **4.1 Feedback received**

Written feedback on the water supply projects has been received from all four city councils. The key aspects are summarised below.

#### **4.1.1 Wellington City Council**

Wellington City Council (WCC) agreed with the Whakatikei site for a future dam but wished to consider all efforts to manage/reduce water consumption to delay or avoid the need for a dam. WCC noted that the short term options and the Upper Hutt aquifer would be progressed following consultation.

WCC also requested that GWRC work with its customers to design consultation to ensure that both demand management and supply development options are properly covered.

#### **4.1.2 Hutt City Council**

Hutt City Council (HCC) approved in principle the selection of Whakatikei as the preferred site for a future dam, the construction of a CBD reservoir and raising the level of the Stuart Macaskill Lakes. HCC expressed concern about the potential impact on the Hutt River environment and on water supply from the Waiwhetu aquifer from reduced low flow at the Kaitoke weir and development of the Upper Hutt aquifer. HCC wished to see any consenting process fully notified.

*Note that further presentations have since been made to HCC to address their concerns over the potential impact of reduced low flow at the Kaitoke weir on the Hutt River, and the occurrence of algal blooms. A briefing on the multi-criteria analysis process used in selecting Whakatikei as the preferred site for a dam is also programmed for February.*

#### 4.1.3 Upper Hutt City Council

Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC) supported the short-term options to re-instate the security of supply standard and develop the Upper Hutt aquifer, but wished to see the development of a dam considered as a part of the Regional Water Strategy. No feedback was received on the preferred dam site.

#### 4.1.4 Porirua City Council

Porirua City Council's (PCC) preference is for demand management initiatives to be prioritised over water supply development options. The council's belief is that whilst demand management initiatives are initially more costly than the short term development projects, they could be less expensive overall. The council also has concerns that the ecological effects on the Hutt River from these projects will not be environmentally acceptable, and that failure to gain consents would bring forward the construction of a dam. No feedback was received on the preferred dam site.

#### 4.1.5 Summary of feedback

The feedback received is summarised in the following table:

	Summary of Feedback Received			
	WCC	HCC	UHCC	PCC
<b>Reduced low flow at Kaitoke weir</b>	Intention to be progressed noted	Concern over impact on Hutt River & Waiwhetu aquifer	Supported	Concern that project will not gain consent, resulting in need to construct dam
<b>Raise level of Stuart Macaskill Lakes</b>	Intention to be progressed noted	Supported	Supported	-
<b>CBD Reservoir</b>	Improved security of supply benefit noted	Supported	Supported	-
<b>Upper Hutt aquifer</b>	Intention to be progressed noted	Concern over impact on Hutt River & Waiwhetu aquifer	Supported	Concern that project will not gain consent, resulting in need to construct dam
<b>Dam</b>	Whakatikei site supported	Whakatikei site supported	-	-
<b>Demand management</b>	Consider all efforts to manage/reduce water consumption to delay/avoid dam	-	-	Demand management preferred over development options
<b>Supply vs Demand</b>	Consult on both demand management and development	-	Consider development of dam in conjunction with Regional Water Strategy	Support for cost/benefit analysis of supply vs demand management

## 5. Conclusions

The feedback received from our bulk water supply customers varies from a preference for demand management initiatives over supply development, to support for supply development but with strong concern expressed over the potential degradation of the Hutt River and impact on the Waiwhetu aquifer.

The feedback indicates an acceptable level of support for the four short-term projects but we will need to keep HCC, as a key stakeholder, fully informed on the results of environmental studies and the consenting process.

The selection of the Whakatikei site for construction of a dam when needed was supported by our 2 larger customers and no specific comment on location was provided by UHCC or PCC.

There is, however, a majority preference by our customers for water supply development decisions beyond reinstating the security of supply to be considered together with demand management initiatives. Implementation of demand management initiatives has the potential to defer the timing of both the development of the Upper Hutt aquifer and a dam by a substantial number of years.

## 6. Next Steps

- (a) The preparation of a resource consent application for reduced residual flow at Kaitoke weir is continuing with additional scientific information being obtained and various impacts assessed. Further discussion with key stakeholders is being planned. The intention is to address all concerns with key stakeholders before an application is ready for submission by the end of June 2009. A further report will be submitted to the Committee before a consent application is lodged. The target is to have obtained the consent in time to allow additional water to be abstracted at Kaitoke weir should it be needed during the summer of 2010.
- (b) A study is currently underway to analyse the change in risk from raising the level of the Stuart Macaskill Lakes and identify any mitigation measures needed. The study is planned to be completed by the end of March 2009. This short-term option for water supply development will not be confirmed as a viable project until this study is completed and any consequent change in the cost estimate reviewed. Following consultation on the draft LTCCP, the project could be approved to proceed early in the next financial year for completion by June 2011.
- (c) Work on the CBD reservoir has been delayed until the 2011/2012 financial year as requested by WCC. Preliminary work on the project has stopped. The capital expenditure budget for the GWRC share of the project cost has been adjusted in the draft 2009/19 LTCCP to align with the timing advised by WCC.
- (d) Investigations for the development of the Upper Hutt aquifer are continuing. This includes modelling of the Hutt River flow with and without abstraction from the Upper Hutt aquifer to provide a better understanding of the impact of abstracting water from the aquifer. The information gained should help address the concerns raised by the HCC and PCC. Preparation of a resource

consent application could be completed by June 2010 should approval be received for the project to proceed, however the timing of the development could be deferred by the implementation of demand management initiatives.

- (e) The draft 2009/19 LTCCP contains capital funding for development of the Upper Hutt aquifer by 2015/16 and design and preliminary work on the dam from 2014/15. The timing of both the development of the Upper Hutt aquifer and the dam would be substantially deferred through the implementation of demand management initiatives. The timeline of this project expenditure will be reviewed following consultation on the draft LTCCP and the Regional Water Strategy.
- (f) No further work is being undertaken on the Whakatikei dam at present.

## **7. Communication**

Public consultation on the water supply development projects and demand management options will occur through release of the draft 2009/19 LTCCP and Regional Water Strategy for consultation. A separate media communication on these issues is not seen as necessary.

## **8. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Notes that work is continuing to complete a consent application for a reduction in the residual flow at Kaitoke weir by June 2009.*
4. *Notes that a recommendation on the water supply development projects, and their timing, will be provided to the Committee following consultation on the draft LTCCP and Regional Water Strategy.*

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